

RURAL DISTRICT OF SOUTH SHIELDS.

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR 1897.

To the South Shields Rural District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

My Annual Report for the year 1897 will give in an abbreviated form the work done during that time by myself and the two Sanitary Inspectors for the maintenance of good health in the District.

As in my last report, I have divided it into four headings—

- (1) Vital Statistics.
- (2) Prevalence of Infectious Diseases, and the measures taken to prevent their spread.
- (3) General Sanitation.
- (4) Sanitary Requirements.

Attached to the Manuscript Copy of the Report will be found the Tables A and B, filled up according to the directions of the Local Government Board.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Vital Statistics The Area of the District in Acres is 12,369.
The Estimated Population to the middle of 1897 is 15,800.
The General Death-Rate of the District is 11·1 per 1,000 of the Population.
The Zymotic Rate is 14·8.
The Death-Rate from Phthisis 2·2.
The Birth-Rate 28·2.
The Respiratory Rate 3·3.
The Infant Mortality is altogether 60 cases.

I have omitted purposely in these Statistics the population, births, and deaths which have occurred in the Harton Workhouse and Jarrow Fever Hospital, excepting those cases which have been sent into these Institutions from the South Shields Rural District.

Notifications. 232 cases were notified to me under the Infectious Diseases Notification Act, as against 155 cases in the year 1896. This increase is due to the large number of Scarlet Fever cases reported, especially from the Whitburn District, the cause of which I shall mention later on in this Report. Of the 232 cases, 116 were Scarlet Fever, 5 Diphtheria, 31 Enteric Fever, 1 Continued Fever, 1 Puerperal Fever, and 28 Erysipelas.

PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

January. During this month 9 cases were notified to me. Of these 7 were Scarlet Fever, 1 Enteric Fever, and 1 Diphtheria.
February. 9 cases were notified. 8 were Scarlet Fever and 1 Enteric Fever. 2 of the Scarlet Fever cases were removed to Hospital.
March. 17 cases were notified, 12 being Scarlet Fever, 4 Erysipelas, and 1 Enteric Fever.
April. 12 cases notified. 8 Scarlet Fever, 2 Erysipelas, 1 Diphtheria, and 1 Enteric Fever.
May. 20 cases were notified, 17 being Scarlet Fever, 1 Diphtheria, and 2 Enteric Fever.
June. 14 cases notified, 7 being Scarlet Fever, 6 Erysipelas, 1 Enteric Fever.
July. 9 cases were notified, 5 being Scarlet Fever, 3 Erysipelas, and 1 Diphtheria.
August. 8 cases notified, 6 being Scarlet Fever, 1 Erysipelas, and 1 Diphtheria.

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| September. | 49 cases were notified, 38 being Scarlet Fever, 10 Enteric Fever, and 1 Erysipelas. |
| October. | 30 cases notified. 27 Scarlet Fever, 1 Enteric Fever, and 2 Erysipelas. |
| November. | 25 cases were notified, 11 being Scarlet Fever, 5 Enteric Fever, 3 Erysipelas, 1 Continued Fever, and 1 Puerperal Fever. |
| December. | 30 cases notified. 19 Scarlet Fever, 5 Enteric Fever, and 6 Erysipelas. |

Summary. In the year 1897, the number of Infectious Diseases reported have been greatly in excess of last year. This is to a great extent due to the prevalence of Scarlet Fever in the Whitburn district. The spread of the disease, which was of a mild type, was no doubt due to the carelessness displayed by the parents in allowing their neighbours to visit infected houses. It is to be regretted that more stringent measures have not been enforced to prevent the spread of the disease. Until some measures are taken it is impossible to prevent Scarlet Fever being spread.

The number of cases of Enteric Fever also show a large increase, 31 cases being reported, as against 12 cases in the year 1896. 15 of these cases were reported from Boldon Colliery, and 12 from Boldon. This disease appears to have been very prevalent throughout the neighbouring districts during the year 1897, and probably was due to the dryness of the weather, and the consequent non-flushing of the main drains. I have also to repeat my remarks made in my Annual Report for the year 1896 that the cases occurring in East Boldon were confined to a specified area, viz., round and about the Grey Horse Inn. I invited the Medical Officer of Health for the County of Durham to help me in determining the cause of the outbreak, but we could not name any definite cause.

No case of Small-Pox has been reported in the district.

Eight cases of Infectious Disease were removed to the Fever Hospital, 1 being Enteric Fever, and 7 Scarlet Fever.

As we expect to have a Fever Hospital of our own very shortly, it is to be hoped that more cases, especially of Enteric Fever, will be removed. In three families there have been during the year 1897 more than one member of the family attacked by Enteric Fever, apparently due to direct infection.

GENERAL SANITATION.

January. During this month I reported that offensive heaps of refuse were being placed along the side of the Moor Lane Road. These have since been removed.

A similar complaint was made about the road leading from East Boldon to Tyne Dock. These also have been removed, but I regret to say that the offence is constantly repeated.

I had also to complain of the way in which the Scavenging was being done at Boldon Colliery. This has now been remedied, and the Scavenging at Boldon Colliery is very well carried out.

March. I drew the attention of the Council to the following properties :—

(a) Lorne Cottages, East Boldon.

(b) Farm at the South Bents, Whitburn.

(c) The Folly, West Boldon.

(a) Lorne Cottages. These Cottages have now been provided with proper privy accommodation, and they are now in a sanitary condition.

(b) Farm at the South Bents, Whitburn. Here the disposal of sewage has not been satisfactorily dealt with.

(c) The Folly, West Boldon. This property has now been placed in thorough repair, and new ash-closets have been built.

Harton Village. I reported on the property owned by Mr. Irwin, of South Shields. This was in very bad repair, but has now been placed in a sanitary condition, and three new dry earth-closets have been built.

West Hall Farm Whitburn. I reported that the drainage of the farm house and outbuildings was very defective, and that the farmyard was not kept in a sanitary condition. The nuisance has now been abated, a new surface drain has been laid, and the spouting of the outbuildings has been connected with it.

Harton Village. I reported on the condition of Mr. Hall's property, which I had previously inspected. This property required more privy accommodation, which has since been provided, and the drains have been thoroughly cleansed.

Do. Miss Myres' property. I reported that there were two tenants living here, one downstairs and one upstairs. Neither of these tenants had ash-pit or privy accommodation for their use. The rooms of the house were very damp, owing to defective roofing and spouting. A new slate roof has replaced the old one, the spouting has been renewed, and a water-closet has been fixed in the yard.

A complaint was received from the Harton Parish Council about the stench arising from a ventilating shaft at the end of the house No. 1, Wenlock Road, Harton. This shaft has now been closed.

May. Boldon Colliery. I drew the attention of the Council to the water lying beneath the floors of many of the houses in Fenwick's Row, Boldon Colliery. This state of things exists in many other houses besides those of Fenwick's Row, and no doubt is one of the chief causes why there is so much sickness always prevalent at Boldon Colliery. Nothing has been done to prevent the lodgment of this water, though this is partly due to the unwillingness of the tenants to make complaints. Fenwick's Row has more cases of Enteric Fever reported each year than any other Row in the Colliery.

- Boldon Colliery** I reported on the insufficient privy and ash-pit accommodation for Topping's Row, Boldon Colliery. New earth-closets are now being provided.
- West Boldon.** I visited the house in West Boldon occupied by Mr. Davison, farmer, and reported that the spouts were very defective, and consequently that the walls were very damp. The roof also wanted repairs. This has now been done.
- Ellerscope Farm.** Owing to a case of Enteric Fever occurring at this farm, I advised the District Council to have the water from the well tested. The Analyst reported "that the sample is mixed with impure surface water, . . . such water is not of satisfactory quality for either drinking or dairying purposes. I find no evidence of sewage contamination, and I consider that if there is a good spring, and the method of impounding it was such as to prevent the access of surface water, no objection could then be taken to the use of the water for drinking and dairying purposes." As a result of this report, the well has now been built round with bricks and cement, and a door put in.
- Hylton Bridge Farm.** A satisfactory supply of water has not yet been provided for Hylton Bridge Farm, occupied by Mr. Shaw.
- August.** During this month I visited several of the outlying farms in the district.
- 1st. Monkton Hill Farm. This farm and the outbuildings were in a thoroughly sanitary condition.
- 2nd. Scott's House High Farm. The interior of the house was very damp, owing to defective spouting, and a bad roof. These have now been attended to.
- 3rd. North Folingsby Farm. Several of the rooms in this farm-house were very damp, owing to bad spouting and roof. Both have been repaired since my report.
- 4th. Cleadon Park Farm. I reported that this farm was not provided with any proper dairy, the milk being stored in a general store-room. I regret to say that nothing has been done to provide one, and I consider that a proper dairy is an absolute essential for every dairy farm.
- Caldwell.** Barker's Property, Caldwell. This property has frequently been reported on, and it is still in an insanitary condition. The cottage occupied by Purvis requires a new earth closet. The roof of the wash-house should be repaired, and a new drain provided. New spouts should replace the old ones. The drain in the yard is constantly blocked up, allowing percolation of its contents into the soft-water tank.
- The whole of the drainage from Barker's Terrace goes into an open ditch, which at the time of my visit was evidently blocked up at its lower end, and was full of black, stinking water. As this ditch is close to some cottages, it is evident that a proper system of drainage for the Terrace should be introduced.
- September. Cleadon.** Complaints were made to me about the bad state of the drain and ash-pit in the yard at the back of the house in Cleadon village, occupied by Mr. Humphrey, and owned by Mr. Burdon, of Cleadon. I visited and reported on the same, and the premises have now been placed in a thoroughly sanitary condition.
- I also drew the attention of the District Council to a nuisance at Mr. Burdon's farm, Cleadon, owing to it being insufficiently drained. A new drain is now being laid, and I expect that very shortly the premises will be in a satisfactory condition.
- East Boldon.** Owing to an outbreak of Enteric Fever in East Boldon, I reported on certain defects at the farm occupied by Mr. Hayton. A new ash-closet has been built, away from the house, and the old one removed, as it was far too close to the dairy. The yard should be put into proper repair.
- do.** The farm occupied by Mr. Tudberry, East Boldon, where there were four patients lying ill of Enteric Fever, was also visited. This farm is situated in the infected area before-mentioned. The privy is here situated next to a dwelling-house, and is of a very primitive pattern. The soakage from the midden runs into the cow-byre. A new earth-closet should be built, and the midden attended to. Nothing has yet been done. During the illness of the tenants at both these farms, the cows were removed right away from the farms, and every one who had anything to do with the milking, etc., were kept out of the infected houses.
- do.** I also reported on the unsatisfactory condition of the yard of a house in Prospect Terrace, East Boldon, occupied by Mr. Williamson, a gamekeeper. The owner of the property is Mrs. Blanche, or her daughter, Mrs. Johnson, East Boldon. The yard should be cemented; at present it is in a very insanitary condition. The soakage from the midden runs across the yard. Nothing has been done to remedy the defects.
- do.** The unsatisfactory means of disposal of the ash-pit refuse from the house occupied by G. Cuthill, Back Lane, East Boldon, has now been rectified, and there is now no reason for complaint.
- October. Boldon Colliery Board Schools.** As there were grave complaints about the state of the Boldon Colliery Board Schools, I visited the premises during this month. There was a most unhealthy smell in most of the rooms, arising from the presence of sewer gas. I at once closed the schools for 10 days. A thorough inspection of the drains were made, the Architect being present, and it was found that the joints in the drains leaked, and that nearly all the drains were untrapped, and consequently that there was a free admission of sewer gas into the room especially complained of. The drains beneath the floors have since been removed, and all the drains cut off from the interior of the school. A new scheme of drainage is to be carried out, as soon as the new sewer from the Colliery Village is completed.
- Summary.** The sanitary state of the buildings in the district is much improved, and most of the dwellings complained of have been put into a sanitary condition. The complaints for the most part have been

due to defective roofing and spouting, and these have been attended to, except in one or two instances. No houses have been condemned in the past 12 months. I must again repeat my remarks made in my last Annual Report regarding the want of houses, especially at Boldon Colliery, and the consequent overcrowding.

As regards the outbreak of Enteric Fever at East Boldon, it does not appear that there was any definite cause for it which can definitely be named. It was quite possible that it was imported from Cowpen, where there was an epidemic raging. It is curious, however, that this disease should confine itself to a small area, and suspicion must fall on the drains in the locality. I would advise more frequent flushing of the drains, and also that the present means of flushing should be abolished, and a more powerful one substituted.

Complaints are justly made about the smells arising from the man-holes in East Boldon.

At Boldon Colliery there were several cases of Enteric Fever, and it is noticeable that in more than one house several members of the same family were attacked. This was probably due to insufficient disinfection of the excreta from the patients first attacked, but it also emphasises the fact that now means should be taken to insist on removal of Typhoid cases to Hospital. There were few cases of Enteric Fever at Harton or Whitburn. This past year also the disease has more approached the normal type of the disease, viz., there has been more sickness and diarrhoea than occurred in the cases reported in 1895 and 1896.

The scavenging on the whole has been satisfactorily done, especially at Boldon Colliery. It may here be pointed out that the plan now adopted at Boldon Colliery, of giving the scavenging contract to one individual, who does nothing else, is more satisfactory than dividing the contract among two or more.

The work of converting the old ash-pits and privies at Boldon Colliery into earth-closets is now rapidly being proceeded with.

The state of the streets at Boldon Colliery is now much improved. Several of the streets have been paved, and the main thoroughfares have been laid with ashes and footpaths made

Steps are now being taken for providing a Fever Hospital for the district.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTOR YOUNG'S REPORT.

Mr. Young says:—"During the past year the cleansing of ash-pits and cesspools has been well attended to, with two exceptions. The flushing of sewers and cleansing of the various shafts and catch-pits has been regularly carried out, but I have reported to the Council that the present flushing barrel is useless for flushing the larger sewers. I am given to understand that much better appliances (in the form of a new flushing van, etc.), will be provided shortly, in order that the work may be done more efficiently.

A new sewer has been laid to the new houses in Station Lane, East Boldon, and two new flushing shafts have been put in, one at the Hawthorns and the other behind Salisbury Terrace.

Boldon
Colliery.

The following streets have been paved during the year:—Hedworth North Back Street, and cross street to same; the back street behind Heckles' Row and Davison Street; from the Burton House to the end of Store Buildings; whilst the front of Davison Street has been kerbed and channelled, and the carriage-way made.

New sewers have been laid in the north-west portion of the land in Hedworth Lane, and to the cottages at Brockley Whins crossing, and a new covered cesspool for drains at Pike's Hole Farm, near Scott's House.

Harton Parish.

The sewer behind Straker Terrace having been found to be very defective has been taken up and re-laid. A new flushing shaft has been put in to the sewer in D'Arcy Street. Works of street paving have been carried out at Jordison's Buildings, Heckles' Buildings, and the back street behind Green Lane Crescent.

Ash-closets have been built in the place of open ash-pits in D'Arcy Street (two back streets), Post-Office Buildings, and Jordison's Buildings, but the privies and ash-pits of the houses between the two railways in Green Lane, the property of the North-Eastern Railway Company, are still in the same condition as when inspected nothing having yet been done to convert these into ash-closets.

Monkton
Parish.

New drains and a covered cesspool have been put in at the farm occupied by Mr. Young, at Hedworth. During the year there have been built 32 new houses, or tenements occupied in the following divisions of the district, viz.:—Boldon, 6; Boldon Colliery, 8; Harton, 8; Monkton, 10.

Dairies, etc.

Inspections have been made under this order, but there has been nothing serious to complain of.

Infectious
Diseases.

The various cases of infectious diseases reported have been visited from time to time and disinfectants freely supplied. One lot of infected bedding and clothing has been removed and burnt after a fatal case of Enteric Fever at Store Buildings, Boldon Colliery.

Fire Plugs.

These have been fixed as follows:—3 in East Boldon, 3 in West Boldon, Boldon Colliery 2, Monkton 2, Hedworth 1, Green Lane 4, West Harton 2.

Urinals.

Two urinals have been erected at Harton Colliery and Green Lane.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTOR WELSH'S REPORT.

Mr. Welsh says :—" Mr. Ventriss' stable at Whitburn has now been placed in a sanitary condition, the spouting, paving, and drainage having been attended to.

Plans have been prepared and a tender accepted for extending the sewer up to the new houses in Moor Lane, Whitburn.

A new sewer has been laid at the Chemical Cottages, Marsden ; the privy doors to these cottages have also been repaired."

Mr. Welsh recommends that an ash-closet should take the place of the present ashpit and privy at Capt. Beazley's house, Harton.

The whole of the Lizard's Farm, Whitburn, has been drained into a cesspool at the S.E. side of the buildings, with a chain pump attached. The hind's house has also been drained into a smaller cesspool.

A new drain has been laid to Sir Hedworth Williamson's farm (occupied by Mr. Smith), at the Bents, Whitburn, and the ventilating shaft from the w.c. has been carried up to a higher level.

The Water Company have fixed fire-plugs throughout the district, viz., 3 at Harton Village, 4 at Cleadon, 12 at Whitburn, and 6 at Marsden.

During the year there have been 25 new houses erected in this Division.

The flushing of the main sewers in the district is attended to every three months.

Dairies, etc. The cow-sheds and dairies in the district have been visited, and have been found to be in a sanitary condition.

Scavenging. The scavenging work has been well attended to in the Whitburn district.

Cleadon Sewerage. The new main sewer from Cleadon House Estate to the beach at Whitburn Bents appears to be progressing satisfactorily. This when completed, I understand, will effectually dispose of the sewage from the whole of Cleadon Village and the houses now being erected on the Cleadon House Estate, and also the cottages at Whitburn Bents.

SANITARY REQUIREMENTS.

(a) The better draining of many of the houses at Boldon Colliery.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Faithfully yours,

WILLIAM ARMSTRONG, L.R.C.P., etc.,

Medical Officer of Health.

